OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

Edited by

FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E. Secretary to the Commission

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OPINION 365

Suppression, under the Plenary Powers, of the specific name cinereous Le Conte, 1852, as published in the combination Crotalus cinereous, for the purpose of rendering the specific name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the combination Crotalus atrox, the oldest available name for the Western Diamond Rattlesnake (Class Reptilia, Order Squamata)

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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN OPINION 365

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Mr. P. C. Sylvester-Bradley (Sheffield University, Sheffield, England) (12th

August 1953)

Dr. L. B. HOLTHUIS (Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands) (12th August 1953)

OPINION 365

SUPPRESSION, UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS, OF THE SPECIFIC NAME "CINEREOUS" LE CONTE, 1852, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "CROTALUS CINEREOUS", FOR THE PURPOSE OF RENDERING THE SPECIFIC NAME "ATROX" BAIRD & GIRARD, 1853, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "CROTALUS ATROX", THE OLDEST AVAILABLE NAME FOR THE WESTERN DIAMOND RATTLESNAKE (CLASS REPTILIA, ORDER SQUAMATA)

RULING:—(1) Under the Plenary Powers the specific name cinereous Le Conte, 1852, as published in the combination Crotalus cinereous, is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy.

- (2) The under-mentioned specific name is hereby placed on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* with the Name No. 505:—atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the combination *Crotalus atrox*.
- (3) The under-mentioned specific name is hereby placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* with the Name No. 129:—cinereous Le Conte, 1852, as published in the combination *Crotalus cinereous*, as suppressed under the Plenary Powers under (1) above.

I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 9th April 1951 Dr. Laurence M. Klauber (San Diego, California, U.S.A.) submitted to the Commission the following application for the suppression under the Plenary Powers of the specific name cinereous Le Conte, 1852, as published in the combination Crotalus cinereous, for the purpose of preserving the specific name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the combination Crotalus atrox, as the name for the Western Diamond Rattlesnake:—

Proposed use of the Plenary Powers to preserve for the western diamond rattlesnake the trivial name "atrox" Baird & Girard, 1853 (as published in the combination "Crotalus atrox") by suppressing the trivial name "cinereous" Le Conte in Hallowell, 1852 (as published in combination "Crotalus cinereous") (Class Reptilia, Order Squamata)

By LAURENCE M. KLAUBER (San Diego, California, U.S.A.)

The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to preserve the well-known trivial name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the binominal combination Crotalus atrox for the western diamond rattlesnake by the use of its Plenary Powers to suppress the earlier trivial name cinereous Le Conte in Hallowell, 1852, as published in the combination Crotalus cinereous (Class Reptilia, Order Squamata).

- 2. In 1852, Hallowell (:177) described the rattlesnake *Crotalus lecontei*. This nominal species has since seldom been recognised as valid, its name being usually considered a synonym of *Crotalus confluentus* Say, 1823, or, more recently, of *Crotalus viridis* Rafinesque, 1818. This disposition of *lecontei* Hallowell is undoubtedly correct, as was demonstrated by Stejneger in do Amaral, 1929 (:87). The validity of *lecontei* has no bearing on the question herein raised.
- 3. In the course of his description of *lecontei*, Hallowell included the following paragraph:—
- "Remarks. My friend, Dr. Le Conte informs me that he found near the Colorado, about seven hundred miles from the last mentioned locality, a species of crotalus which was very abundant in that region;

over four feet in length, and which appears to be the same as the one above described. He took the following notes of it upon the spot: 'Crotalus-cinereous; black with a series of subrhomboidal spots margined with dark brown, and exterior to this a line of white scales; sides with a few darker cinereous spots; beneath pale ochraceous; neck and upper part of head white; tail white with four black rings,* becoming irregular beneath; length $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft.; greatest circumference $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 185 transverse scales beneath the body, 28 caudal; fourteen scales in the oblique rows from spine to side in middle and on neck; nine posteriorly and on tail. Colorado, March, 1851. The dorsal spots became indistinct behind. Sandy deserts'."[This extract from Le Conte occurs on page 177.]

- 4. In 1854, Hallowell repeated his description of *lecontei* and again repeated under "Remarks" the quotation from Le Conte's communication. In this reprint the words *Crotalus cinereous* were italicised and the hyphen was omitted, and there were several other minor changes, including the change of the word "black", after the name, to "back".
- 5. As I have discussed elsewhere (Klauber, 1936: 194), although Hallowell thought that Le Conte's *cinereous* was the same as the rattlesnake that he (Hallowell) was describing as *C. lecontei*, actually it was a quite different snake. For the description and the type locality, the Colorado [Desert], leave no question but that the description covers the western diamond rattlesnake *Crotalus atrox* Baird and Girard, 1853 (: 5).
- 6. It seems to me that, although Hallowell had no such intention, his inclusion of Le Conte's manuscript name and description constitutes a valid description under *Opinion* 4 of the Commission, as further discussed in vol. 1, part 13, pp. 103—114, of the *Opinions and Declarations*, 1944; and that the name *Crotalus cinereous* Le Conte in Hallowell, 1852, anticipates *Crotalus atrox* Baird and Girard, 1853. Gloyd (1940: 205) has taken a contrary view, primarily because of the inclusion of the dash and the lack of italics in the first publication of Le Conte's manuscript description.
- 7. Although I sought to establish *Crotalus cinereous* as the proper name of the western diamond rattlesnake in 1936, at a time when no official means were available for the conservation of trivial names, I am quite willing to withdraw from that position, now that a procedure for such conservation has been duly established. Therefore I suggest

^{*} In a young specimen brought by Dr. Woodhouse these four black rings are very distinct.

that this question be finally settled by stabilising the long-established and currently utilised name atrox Baird & Girard for this species. It is important that this be done, since the name atrox is employed not only by systematists, but likewise also extensively by the medical profession, for the western diamond rattlesnake in the United States. The concrete proposals now submitted are that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature should:—

- (1) use its Plenary Powers to suppress the trivial name *cinereous* Le Conte *in* Hallowell, 1852, as published in the binominal combination *Crotalus cinereous*, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;
- (2) place the trivial name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the binominal combination Crotalus atrox, on the Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology;
- (3) place the trivial name *cinereous* Le Conte *in* Hallowell, 1852, as published in the binominal combination *Crotalus cinereous*, as proposed, in (1) above, to be suppressed under the Plenary Powers, on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*.

References

- Baird, Spencer F. and Girard, Charles, 1853. Catalogue of North American Reptiles in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Part 1.—Serpents, pp. xvi + 172.
- Do Amaral, Afranio, 1929. On *Crotalus confluentus* Say, 1823, and its Allied Forms. *Bull. Antivenin Inst. Amer.*, **2**(4): 86—97.
- Gloyd, Howard K., 1940. The Rattlesnakes, Genera Sistrurus and Crotalus. Chicago Acad. Sci., Spec. Publ. 4: pp. vi + 270.
- Hallowell, Edward, 1852. Descriptions of New Species of Reptiles Inhabiting North America. *Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.*, 4(5): 177—182.
- —, 1854. Reptiles: in "Report of an Expedition down the Zuni and Colorado Rivers" by Captain L. Sitgreaves. Washington, pp. 106—152.
- Klauber, Laurence M., 1936. A Key to the Rattlesnakes with Summary of Characteristics. *Trans. San Diego Soc. nat. Hist.*, 8(20): 185—276.

II.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

- 2. Registration of the present application: Upon the receipt of Dr. Klauber's application, the question of the use of the Plenary Powers for the purpose of preserving the specific name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the combination Crotalus atrox, to be the name for the Western Diamond Rattlesnake was allotted the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 523.
- 3. Support received prior to the publication of the present application: In the period between the receipt of the present application and its publication in the Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature support for the action under the Plenary Powers proposed was received from the following specialists and groups of specialists:—(1) Dr. C. B. Perkins (Zoological Society of San Diego, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, U.S.A); (2) Dr. Edward H. Taylor (University of Kansas, Department of Zoology, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A.); (3) Professor Hobart M. Smith (University of Illinois, Department of Zoology, Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A.); (4) Dr. Karl P. Schmidt, Dr. D. Dwight Davis and Dr. Clifford H. Pope (Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.); (5) Dr. Charles M. Bogert (The American Museum of Natural History, New York); (6) Dr. Howard K. Gloyd (The Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.). The communications received from these specialists are reproduced in the immediately following paragraphs.
- 4. Support received from Dr. C. B. Perkins (Zoological Society of San Diego, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, U.S.A.): On 9th April 1952 Dr. C. B. Perkins (Zoological Society of San Diego, California, U.S.A.) addressed the following letter to the Commission in support of the present application (Perkins, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 8:156):—
- I think L. M. Klauber is correct in his contention that *Crotalus cinereous* antedates *Crotalus atrox* and also that *Crotalus multimaculatus* is the correct name for the snake now known as *Crotalus polystictus*.

However, Crotalus atrox and Crotalus polystictus have been used for many years. Changing the names would cause confusion. Therefore, I believe the Commission should place Crotalus atrox and Crotalus polystictus on the Official List and place Crotalus cinereous and Crotalus multimaculatus on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Names.

5. Support received from Dr. Edward H. Taylor (University of Kansas, Department of Zoology, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A.): On 16th April 1952 Dr. Edward H. Taylor (University of Kansas, Department of Zoology, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A.) intimated as follows his support for the present application (Taylor, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 9:156):—

I heartily concur in Dr. Klauber's proposals. These are the names that Dr. Hobart M. Smith and Taylor used in their work "An Annotated Checklist and Key to the Snakes of Mexico".

I heartily trust that the Commission will accept the proposals.

6. Support received from Professor Hobart M. Smith (University of Illinois, Department of Zoology, Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A.): On 28th April 1952 Professor Hobart M. Smith (University of Illinois, Department of Zoology, Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A.) addressed the following letter to the Commission in support of the present application (Smith, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 6: 256):—

It does not appear to me that *Crotalus cinereous* Le Conte, 1852, is an available name, but that upon careful consideration other conclusion is possible has been well demonstrated. In such controversial matters a complete analysis of the various interpretations involved is not needed nearly as much as a simple establishment by the Commission of the proper name. In this case there can be no question that conservation of *atrox* would best serve nomenclatorial stability.

There is less reason for uncertainty regarding availability of *multi-maculata*, which clearly, in the interest of stability should be suppressed at the same time that *polystictus* is placed on the *Official List*.

Both the recommendations suggested by Dr. Klauber have much merit in eliminating possible causes for confusion, and commendable also is his prompt adoption of the long-needed procedure for conserving long-recognized names which by strict application of the rules would be changed. This is certainly one of the most important advances of nomenclatorial procedure in a good many years. We can now anticipate a real decrease in the alarming rate of name changes.

7. Support received from Dr. Karl P. Schmidt, Dr. D. Dwight Davis and Dr. Clifford H. Pope (Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.): On 29th April 1952 Dr. Karl P. Schmidt, Dr. D. Dwight Davis and Dr. Clifford H. Pope (Chicago Natural History Museum, Illinois, U.S.A.) intimated as follows their support for the present application (Schmidt, Davis & Pope, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 6: 256):—

We wish to support the application of Dr. L. M. Klauber regarding the name *Crotalus atrox* versus *Crotalus cinereous* and *Crotalus polystictus* as against *Crotalus multimaculatus*.

8. Support received from Dr. Charles M. Bogert (The American Museum of Natural History, New York): On 6th May 1952 Dr. Charles M. Bogert (*The American Museum of Natural History*, New York) addressed the following letter to the Commission in support of the present application (Bogert, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 6: 360):—

I am writing to advise you that I am heartily in accord with Dr. L. M. Klauber's suggestion that the names *Crotalus atrox* Baird & Girard, 1853, and *Crotalus polystictus* (Cope, 1865) be placed on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*, and that the names *Crotalus cinereous* Le Conte in Hallowell, 1852, and *Crotalus multimaculatus* Jan, 1853, be placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Trivial Names*.

It is eminently preferable to continue using the names *Crotalus atrox* and *Crotalus polystictus*, both of which have been long and widely used in preference to those that, in accordance with Dr. Klauber's recommendations, should be placed on the *Official Index* of Rejected and Invalid Names.

9. Support received from Dr. Howard K. Gloyd (The Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.): On 29th May 1952 Dr. Howard K. Gloyd (*The Chicago Academy of Sciences*,

Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.) notified the Commission as follows of his support for the present application (Gloyd, 1952, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 9:155):—

I am writing to express my opinion on the following two cases of nomenclature of rattlesnakes submitted to the Commission by Dr. L. M. Klauber:—

- (1) Crotalus cinereous Le Conte in Hallowell, 1852, versus Crotalus atrox Baird & Girard, 1853; and
- (2) Crotalus multimaculatus Jan, 1863, versus Crotalus polystictus (Cope, 1865).

In regard to the first, I still hold the opinion expressed in my paper of 1940 on the rattlesnakes (*Chicago Acad. Sci.*, Special Publ. 4:205, footnote). I do not think the first publication of the "name" *cinereous* was intended as a specific name, but rather as a descriptive adjective. In addition to this, the dropping of *atrox* Baird & Girard after nearly a hundred years of unquestioned application should be avoided, if possible.

I have not personally studied the question of *multimaculatus* versus *polystictus*, but I have read Dr. Klauber's discussion of the case with care and am quite content to accept his recommendations.

- 10. Publication of the present application: The present application was sent to the printer on 13th May 1952 and was published in Part 8 of volume 6 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* on 23rd July of the same year (Klauber, 1952, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 6: 234—236).
- 11. Issue of Public Notices: In accordance with the revised procedure prescribed by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948 (1950, Bull. zool. Nomencl. 4:51—56), Public Notice of the possible use by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature of its Plenary Powers in the present case was given on 23rd July 1952 (a) in Part 8 of volume 6 of the Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature (the Part in which Dr. Klauber's application was published) and (b) to the other prescribed serial publications. In addition, Public Notice was given also to certain general zoological serial publications.

- 12. Comments received in response to the issue of the prescribed Public Notices: The publication of the Public Notices specified in paragraph 11 above elicited three further comments supporting the present application. These were received from the following specialists:—(1) Mr. Roger Conant (Philadelphia Zoological Garden, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.); (2) Dr. Richard A. Edgren (Division of Biological Research, Searle & Co., Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.); (3) Dr. Jay M. Savage (Stanford University, Natural History Museum, Stanford, California, U.S.A.). The communications so received are reproduced in the immediately following paragraphs. No objection to the action proposed was received from any source.
- 13. Support received from Mr. Roger Conant (Philadelphia Zoological Garden, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.): On 18th November 1952, Mr. Roger Conant (Philadelphia Zoological Garden, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.) addressed to the Commission a letter dealing, inter alia, with the present application, for which he intimated his support as follows:—

I am in favor of the conservation of the name Crotalus atrox as against Crotalus cinereous and Crotalus polystictus as against Crotalus multimaculatus, as suggested by Dr. L. M. Klauber.

14. Support received from Dr. Richard A. Edgren (Division of Biological Research, Searle & Co., Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.): On 24th November 1952 Dr. Richard A. Edgren (Division of Biological Research, Searle & Co., Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.) addressed a letter to the Commission in support of the present and other applications. The following extract is that which deals with the present case:—

I am in favor of the validation of Crotalus atrox Baird and Girard, 1852.

15. Support received from Dr. Jay M. Savage (Stanford University, Natural History Museum, Stanford, California, U.S.A.): On 28th November, 1952, Dr. Jay M. Savage (Stanford University, Natural History Museum, Stanford, California, U.S.A.) addressed

to the Commission a letter commenting upon a number of current cases and, as regards the present application, intimating his support as follows:—

There is no question that the best interest of all concerned lies in the continued usage of *Crotalus atrox*.

16. Bearing on the present application of the decision regarding the status of names published in synonymies taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953: On 10th March 1954 Mr. Hemming, as Secretary, placed the following Minute on the Commission's File Z.N.(S.) 523:—

On the bearing on Dr. L. M. Klauber's application regarding the specific name for the Western Diamond Rattlesnake of the decision as to the status of names published in synonymies taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953

MINUTE by FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E., Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

In discussing the specific name *cinereous* Le Conte, 1852, as published in the combination *Crotalus cinereous*—the suppression of which is the object of the present application—Dr. L. M. Klauber considered (in paragraph 6) the question whether this name must be regarded as an available name, notwithstanding the fact that at the time when it was published it was a manuscript name and that the author by whom it was published (Hallowell) sank it as a synonym. Dr. Klauber concluded—perfectly correctly at the time when he wrote the present application—that the decision taken by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, when incorporating into the *Règles* the Ruling given in *Opinion* 4 did, in fact, confer the status of availability upon the specific name *cinereous* Le Conte, as published in the combination *Crotalus cinereous*, by Hallowell in 1852.

2. Since the submission of Dr. Klauber's application the question of principle embodied in *Opinion* 4 has been further considered by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, which reversed the greater part of the decision by the Paris Congress, thus depriving many names published in synonymies of the status of availability. This decision however applied only to names published

in synonymies "without independent descriptions" (1953, Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.: 63—64, Decision 115). In the present case the manuscript name cinereous Le Conte was published and rejected by Hallowell, but, as he supplied for the taxon so named the brief "indication" written by Le Conte (and quoted by Dr. Klauber in paragraph 3 of his application), the name cinereous Le Conte in Hallowell retains under the Copenhagen decision the status of availability which it previously possessed under the decision of the Paris Congress.

3. The application in the present case is thus in no way affected by the decision of the Copenhagen Congress and may therefore go forward to the Commission for immediate vote.

III.—THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

- 17. Issue of Voting Paper V.P.(54)33: On 17th March 1954, a Voting Paper (V.P.(54)33) was issued in which the Members of the Commission were invited to vote either for, or against, "the proposal relating to the name atrox Baird & Girard, 1853, as published in the combination Crotalus atrox, as set out in paragraph 7 on page 235 of volume 6 of the Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature" [i.e. in paragraph 7 of the application reproduced in the first paragraph of the present Opinion].
- 18. The Prescribed Voting Period for Voting Paper V.P.(54)33: As the foregoing Voting Paper was issued under the Three-Month Rule, the Prescribed Voting Period closed on 17th June 1954.

- 19. Particulars of the Voting on Voting Paper V.P.(54)33: At the close of the Prescribed Voting Period, the state of the voting on Voting Paper V.P.(54)33 was as follows:—
 - (a) Affirmative Votes had been given by the following nineteen (19) Commissioners (arranged in the order in which Votes were received):

Riley; Holthuis; Vokes; Hering; Bonnet; Boschma; Lemche; Dymond; do Amaral; Sylvester-Bradley; Esaki; Mertens; Bradley (J.C.); Hankó; Pearson; Stoll; Hemming; Jaczewski; Cabrera;

(b) Negative Votes:

None;

(c) Voting Papers not returned:

None.

20. Declaration of Result of Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(54)33: On 18th June 1954, Mr. Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, acting as Returning Officer for the Vote taken on Voting Paper V.P.(54)33, signed a Certificate that the Votes cast were as set out in paragraph 19 above and declaring that the proposal submitted in the foregoing Voting Paper had been duly adopted and that the decision so taken was the decision of the International Commission in the matter aforesaid.

- 21. Preparation of the Ruling given in the present "Opinion": On 25th Febuary 1955, Mr. Hemming prepared the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* and at the same time signed a Certificate that the terms of that Ruling were in complete accord with those of the proposal approved by the International Commission in its Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(54)33.
- **22.** Original References: The following are the original references for the names placed on *Official Lists* and *Official Indexes* by the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*:—

atrox, Crotalus, Baird & Girard, 1853, Cat. N. Amer. Rept. Mus. Smithson. Inst. 1 (Serpents): 5 cinereous, Crotalus, Le Conte, 1852, in Hallowell, 1852, Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad. 5(5): 177

- 23. Family-group-name aspect: As the present *Opinion* is concerned only with certain specific names, no problem in relation to family-group names arises for consideration.
- 24. At the time of the submission of the application dealt with in the present *Opinion*, the expression prescribed for the second portion of the binomen which constitutes the scientific name of a species was the expression "trivial name" and the *Official List* reserved for recording such names was styled the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*, the word "trivial" appearing also in the title of the *Official Index* reserved for recording rejected and invalid names of this category. Under a decision taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, the expression "specific name" was substituted for the expression "trivial name" and corresponding changes were made in the titles of the *Official List* and *Official Index* of such names (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.*: 21). The changes in terminology so adopted have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.
- **25.** The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly

hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

26. The present *Opinion* shall be known as Opinion Three Hundred and Sixty-Five (365) of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Twenty-Fifth day of February, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Five.

Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

FRANCIS HEMMING